

LONGNEY AND EPNEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 21 JANUARY 2013

A MEETING OF LONGNEY AND EPNEY PARISH COUNCIL was held on Monday 21 January 2013, at 7.30pm. at Longney School

PRESENT: Cllrs. Chamberlayne, Finzi, Godwin, Harvie, and Williams; District Cllr. Littleton; P.C. Faye Jones; Simon Cullen and Rhys McCarthy from the Environment Agency; and seventeen residents

APOLOGIES: County Cllr. Blackburn

DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA: None

THE MINUTES of the meeting of Monday 19 November 2012 were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting, with the following amendment to the report on the ENVIRONMENT AGENCY FLOOD POLICY:the possibility of discussing with the IDB to take responsibility for work which the EA will not commit to

MATTERS ARISING:

COTSWOLD WIRELESS: The system has recently been uprated but some very varied speeds are still being experienced

EPNEY TELEPHONE BOX: The telephone box is still available for purchase at £1, to be put to some constructive use. It would be necessary to advise residents if the box was to be owned by the Parish Council, that it is no longer available as a public telephone. The cost of repair and legal matters regarding ownership will be investigated

LITTER SIGNS: It was considered that the new litter signs were not bold enough and other options will be considered, including investigating what other Parish Councils do to deal with this problem

GLOUCESTERSHIRE WILDFOWLERS: The letter sent following the last meeting concerning the use of Longney car park has been acknowledged and members will be notified

POLICE REPORT: P.C. Faye Jones, the new Community Beat Officer for Longney, introduced herself to the Meeting. Her contact details are on the Website. She reported that few crimes take place in the Parish. It was questioned whether Epney comes within her area, and was noted that it is in the area covered by Dursley Police Station. The matter of the mobile police station which passes through the Parish was also queried, and it was assumed that this also comes from Dursley/Stroud, as it does not operate from Gloucester. The Chairman thanked P.C. Jones for attending the meeting

PLANNING: A new planning application had been received for Listed Building Consent for replacement of wooden double-glazed window frames with similar wooden units only in the modern building, at Doris Cottage, Epney. There are no outstanding applications awaiting approval

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: None

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Cllr. Littleton reported that the significant pothole problem following the heavy rain has received prompt attention from the Highways Department following notification. An e-mailed request will usually receive a quick response. The problem of sites for affordable homes in the District now requires an equal number of market value houses to support a group of affordable homes on a new site. District Councillors, including Cllr. Littleton do not support the large number of homes planned at Slimbridge, and would prefer smaller numbers of properties distributed around the District. Unfortunately the

planned development will probably be granted permission on appeal

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY FLOOD POLICY: Simon Cullen and Rhys McCarthy from the Environment Agency attended the meeting to give an update on the New Severn Estuary Flood Risk Strategy. The strategy produced in 2011 was flawed, and through working with the communities which are affected by the possible rise in sea levels since the first document was produced, a new strategy document is now in preparation. It is predicted that the highest tidal rise in the next hundred years will be 0.7 metres. The new strategy takes into consideration climate change and sea level rise, and maintenance of flood defences, and will aim to obtain the agreement of communities affected, with the draft document due to be presented in about a month. The probability of flooding in Longney with the current flood defence is 1 in 200 (1 in 100 at Waterend), using current DEFRA/government predictions of a rise in sea level of approximately 25mm. per year. Maintenance of the current defences should be maintained until about 2050, but there is no guarantee of continued government funding. The annual maintenance budget is decreasing, so work with landowners will be required to find ways of funding continued maintenance should government funding be insufficient. The new strategy will be reviewed every ten years. The original flood strategy proposed the creation of salt marshes where the EA could not afford to maintain existing defences. Communities have insisted that these cannot be created higher up the estuary, which the EA has now accepted. Epney is included in a separate zone with Fretherne/Saul, where flood defences were renewed during the 1990's. Here the probability of flooding is now 1 in 100 years, and there is a commitment to further improve flood defences by 2030, when it is predicted that sea level will have risen 0.1 metres. The cost benefit ratio, the number of properties protected by any length of flood defence, has to be taken into consideration in all work undertaken. Agricultural land is not as highly valued as domestic property in any such calculations. The next step will be to discuss the possibility of any partnership funding. The consultation document will be distributed through the bodies which have taken part in discussions, including Parish Councils. It will also be available online. A question was raised about the flood risk map from which insurance companies obtain information to set premiums. The existing map is very inaccurate. The national flood risk is being updated, and a flood risk assessment should be available for individual properties. Details of a means of contact with the EA for individual householders will be obtained and circulated to residents. The earliest possible warning of future planned maintenance and funding available was requested, also details of the five year rolling plan, which will be updated every year. The current engagement with communities will result in the draft plan being published, followed by a period of consultation, which it is hoped will lead to the best possible outcome for all affected by the threat of flooding along the Severn. The Chairman thanked Simon Cullen and Rhys McCarthy for attending the meeting and answering a number of questions posed on this important matter

CORRESPONDENCE:

GCC - EMERGENCY PLAN: An emergency plan is in existence for the Parish, which currently does not need to change. Copies will be circulated to Councillors

GAPTC - NEWS BULLETIN 20 NOVEMBER: A tree planting scheme was mentioned, but required matched funding, of a minimum of £500. It was therefore considered inappropriate for this Parish. A smaller scheme for planting in the village may be considered

SDC - OPEN SPACE/PLAYING FIELD SURVEY: Councillor Godwin will download and complete the necessary forms

GRCC - NEWSLETTER: This contained an article on the possibility of joint purchase of domestic fuel. An article will be published in the newsletter/website to ascertain whether there would be any interest in such a scheme in the Parish

LOCALISM 2013 - GIVING PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS A VOICE: A brief discussion took place about whether this Parish Council should be participating

GCC - NEW GLOUCESTERSHIRE HIGHWAYS LOCAL HIGHWAY MANAGER:
A new appointment has been made for at least the next sixteen months of Daniel Tiffney to the post of Local Highway Manager for Stroud North in which the Parish lies. He is now the first point of contact for highway related enquiries

GAPTC - TRAINING EVENTS: The Clerk obtained the approval of Councillors to attend a day training event for Clerks in March, at a cost of £85

SEVERN VOICE - LETTER FROM JOHN FIELD ON BEHALF OF SEVERN VOICE AND TWO REPLIES: This was on the subject of affordable homes at Slimbridge which originally proposed 8-10 properties on the site, and has now grown to a proposed development of 24 houses, which is not in the spirit of the requirement of the affordable homes survey carried out in 2007 which suggested small numbers of such properties in individual Parishes. Philip Skill, Head of Planning at SDC, replied that much has changed in recent years, and the National Planning Policy Framework now should be referred to. However, he suggested that local views are welcomed to facilitate affordable and market housing in rural areas. Martin Hutchins, GRCC Rural Housing Enabler, also referred to the changes in government policy, but agreed that 24 homes are in excess of the needs of the Parish of Slimbridge

NEIL CARMICHAEL MP - BROADBAND: Discussed, and agreed that upgrading is needed in the Parish, but improvement may still be some way off

VILLAGE PLAN:

- a) **GARDEN GROUP/EQUIPMENT:** No further information
- b) **HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE:** The flooding in Castle Lane following the heavy rain has been dealt with. A request will be made for the resulting potholes to be filled
- c) **EMERGENCY WARNING SYSTEM:** Now being managed by Cllr. Godwin
- d) **WEBSITE/NEWSLETTER:** A request was made for permission to advertise the Parish photograph book on the website, which was agreed by Councillors, who also agreed for the Parish Council to purchase a copy for PC records and a cheque value £50 was written

OTHER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION:

GRITTING OF CANAL BRIDGES: The canal bridges appear not to have been gritted during the recent snow. A request will be made to the Canal and Rivers Trust that gritting would be appreciated by residents of the Parish who have no alternative but to cross these bridges at future times of similar conditions

DAVID DREW - POLITICAL DEBATES: Details of these rescheduled events which will take place in February, were brought to the attention of Councillors/residents as requested

JUNIOR SECRETARY TO NEIL CARMICHAEL MP - REQUEST FOR MEETING DATES: Will be responded to but it is thought unlikely that he will attend any meeting

SDC - INVITATION TO ATTEND COMMUNITY ASSETS EVENT 5 FEBRUARY:
Brought to the attention of Councillors

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting of Longney and Epney Parish Council will take place at 8.00pm on Monday 18 March 2013 at Longney School

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.48p.m.